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ABSTRACT

Using the expenses reported for 1976-77 in a government survey, and the revenues reported by Catholic diocesan offices, this document presents an analysis of financial data for Catholic elementary schools in the country. Data are reflected for about 80 percent of the 8,281 Catholic schools in 1976-77. Twelve tables supply figures for the following: (1) elementary school sizes, (2) elementary school enrollments (public and Catholic), (3) elementary school enrollments (by percentages), (4) Catholic elementary school costs, (5) relationship of teacher/pupil ratio to per pupil cost, (6) teacher/pupil ratio to per pupil cost (by percentages), (7) sources of revenue, (8) sources of revenue (by percentages), (9) sources of per pupil revenue, (10) ranges of elementary school tuition, (11) elementary per pupil costs (schools ranged by region), and (12) elementary pupil/teacher ratios (by region). (Author/LD)

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Basic Financial Data on Catholic Elementary Schools

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Basic Financial Data
on
Catholic Elementary Schools

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Introduction

Basic financial information on Catholic elementary schools is becoming easier to obtain. Although more than 8,000 schools are scattered throughout the country, often with varying methods of bookkeeping and different parish/school relationships, the small but improving administrative staffs seem to be recording and reporting better than in the past. Accordingly, NCEA has been gradually able to improve the quality of its financial data since the first Data Bank report in 1969-70. Prior to this report, the best available elementary school financial data was published in U.S. Catholic Schools, 1970, U.S. Catholic Schools, 1973-74, and the National Conference on Catholic School Finance, 1975. (These can be ordered from NCEA publication's office.)

This special report has been prepared because new data is being gathered as NCEA, NCES (National Center for Educational Statistics - H.E.W.), and CAPE (Council for American Private Education) collaborate in private school surveys for 1976-77, 1977-78, and 1978-79. Using the expenses reported for 1976-77 in the government survey, and the revenues gathered from diocesan offices, this analysis seeks to present a financial data base for Catholic elementary schools.

At the outset, it may help to consider both public and Catholic schools. Much has been said about the declining enrollment in Catholic schools. It is often overlooked, however, that public school enrollments have also been declining for many years because there are fewer school-age children today. In fact, public school elementary enrollment declined 359,300 pupils (1.4%) in 1976-77, just about proportionate to the Catholic elementary decline of 42,200 pupils (1.7%). Compared to 1975-76, there were about 452 fewer public elementary schools, and 59 fewer Catholic schools in 1976-77.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 compare some public/Catholic elementary school characteristics. Public schools are generally larger. The average school size in 1976-77 is 360 pupils for public schools, 300 for Catholic schools. Most (51.5%) public elementary schools have more than 400 pupils, while most (55.6%) Catholic schools fall between 100-300 pupils. In this regard, it should also be kept in mind that Catholic elementary grades are 1-8, while public school enrollment data reports 1-6 as elementary. Public school grades 7-12 are organizationally considered as secondary level.

There are also geographic differences. Catholic elementary school enrollments are concentrated in the (11) Mideast and Great Lakes states (60.3%). However, the (27) states of the Southeast and West serve about one-half (50.1%) of the public elementary school pupils. This difference no doubt reflects the fact that 60% of Catholic school pupils are in the seven (7) largest states, and that 54% of its pupils are in 20 major city areas. In short, Catholic schools historically were built in the large population centers. As for the New England and Plains areas, these percentages are about equal.

Table No. 1
Elementary School Sizes
1975-76 and 1976-77

Enrollment	Public Schools 1975-76	Public Schools 1976-77	Catholic Schools 1975-76	Catholic Schools 1976-77
1-50	2,092	2,051	91	107
51-100	2,932	2,905	425	464
101-200	8,256	8,265	1,918	1,971
201-300	9,636	9,609	2,519	2,633
301-400	10,716	10,937	1,293	1,259
401-500	9,993	10,086	784	729
501-750	16,140	16,001	959	870
751-1000	6,423	6,078	259	190
Over 1000	3,786	3,590	92	58
Total Schools	69,974	69,522	8,340	8,281

Source: School Marketing Services, 1976-77
Curriculum Information Center

Table No. 2
Elementary School Enrollments - Public and Catholic
1975-76 and 1976-77

Region	Public 1975-76	Public 1976-77	Catholic 1975-76	Catholic 1976-77
New England	1,518,100	1,473,400	166,900	162,000
Mideast	4,394,100	4,263,000	863,600	841,900
Great Lakes	4,948,300	4,829,900	663,100	655,000
Plains	1,965,200	1,926,800	223,000	218,100
Southeast	5,979,600	5,966,600	261,700	261,600
West	6,600,300	6,586,600	347,000	344,500
United States	25,405,600	25,046,300	2,525,300	2,483,100

Sources: Estimates of School Statistics, 1976-77, N.E.A., p. 23
U.S. Catholic Schools, 1977-78, N.C.E.A.

Table No. 3
Elementary School Enrollments - By Percentages
1975-76 and 1976-77

Region (States)	Public 1975-76	Public 1976-77	Catholic 1975-76	Catholic 1976-77
New England (6)	6.0%	5.9%	6.6%	6.5%
Mideast (6)	17.3	17.0	34.2	33.9
Great Lakes (5)	19.5	19.3	26.3	26.4
Plains (7)	7.7	7.7	8.8	8.8
Southeast (12)	23.5	23.8	10.4	10.5
West (15)	26.0	26.3	13.7	13.9
United States (51)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Response and Method

About 80% (6,601 of 8,281) of the Catholic schools in 1976-77 are reflected in the expenses and costs contained in this report. The response rate was substantial for all dioceses and states during the 1977-78 government survey which asked for 1976-77 expenses. Accordingly, the per pupil costs and total expenses shown in Table 4 are probably as reliable as any available. Per pupil costs were computed for each state, and then extended by the enrollment to obtain an estimate of the total dollars needed for "operating expenses" in that state.

It should be pointed out that elementary schools seldom, if ever, book Contributed Services, so the value of these services donated by members of religious communities and clergymen is not included in expenses (or revenue). At the high school level, Contributed Services averaged about 16% of the operating revenue and expenses in 1976-77.

National Estimates

The purpose of national estimates is to try to evaluate the economic contribution of the Catholic sector to the country's total educational effort. NCEA is often asked for national data regarding expenditures and revenues, and for any discernible trends. Remember, however, that these figures are not "facts" but estimates and guidelines. This is true of most national statistics.

Our best estimate is that Catholic elementary schools spent about $1.1 billion on operating expenses for 2.5 million pupils in 1976-77. The national per pupil cost was $463.

	1970-71	1976-77
Total Operating Expenses	$806 million	$1.1 billion
National Per Pupil Cost	$240	$463

In 1970-71, NCEA estimated that year's total operating expenses at $806 million for elementary schools serving 3.3 million pupils. The national per pupil cost was $240. Consequently, Catholic elementary schools spent about $342 million more in 1976-77 and served 878,000 fewer students than in 1970-71.

Regional Per Pupil Costs

Some geographical variations did appear in the regional per pupil cost computations, which are as follows:

New England	$403
Mideast	$461
Great Lakes	$509
Plains	$498
Southeast	$425
West	$413

The Mideast was at the national average ($463), the Great Lakes and Plains areas were above the average. New England, the Southeast, and the West were well below the national average.

Table No. 4
Catholic Elementary School Costs
1976-77

	Schools			PP	Estimated
	Responded	Total	Pupils	Cost	Expenses
Connecticut	113	170	45,196	$437	$ 19,750,700
Massachusetts	196	277	78,686	398	31,317,000
New Hampshire	20	34	9,115	381	3,472,800
Rhode Island	51	66	19,186	361	6,926,100
Vermont	11	12	3,102	475	1,473,500
Maine	15	23	6,691	342	2,288,300
New England	406	582	161,976	403	$ 65,228,400
Delaware	22	29	10,958	$427	$ 4,679,100
Washington, D.C.	64	82	28,071	506	14,204,000
Maryland	77	93	33,531	472	15,826,600
New Jersey	386	476	153,371	466	71,470,900
New York	785	966	356,716	494	176,217,700
Pennsylvania	603	818	259,254	409	106,034,900
Mideast	1,937	2,464	841,901	461	$388,433,200
Illinois	577	687	222,372	$518	$115,188,700
Indiana	161	213	52,518	505	26,521,600
Michigan	238	341	103,431	527	54,508,100
Ohio	433	538	173,779	502	87,237,100
Wisconsin	342	425	102,928	485	49,920,100
Great Lakes	1,751	2,204	655,028	510	$333,375,600
Iowa	131	152	36,575	$529	$ 19,348,200
Kansas	84	91	19,096	482	9,204,300
Minnesota	197	230	56,670	558	31,621,900
Missouri	184	284	72,097	438	31,578,500
Nebraska	74	99	21,459	523	11,223,100
North Dakota	23	33	6,758	515	3,480,400
South Dakota	15	28	5,475	413	2,261,200
Plains	708	917	218,130	498	$108,717,600
Alabama	47	51	12,688	$437	$ 5,544,700
Arkansas	22	32	5,428	307	1,666,400
Florida	129	155	53,034	460	24,395,700
Georgia	29	31	9,784	451	4,412,600
Kentucky	148	166	38,620	418	16,143,200
Louisiana	153	198	80,902	366	29,610,100
Mississippi	19	37	8,794	420	3,693,500
North Carolina	29	40	9,525	385	3,667,100
South Carolina	21	26	6,501	425	2,762,900
Tennessee	37	45	11,811	523	6,177,200
Virginia	46	54	17,868	550	9,827,400
West Virginia	32	37	6,678	480	3,205,400
Southeast	712	872	261,633	425	$111,106,200

(Continued on P. 6)

Past Efforts and Estimates

Since it has been difficult to obtain financial information on Catholic elementary schools in any great volume during the past decade, NCEA has placed a strong emphasis upon the most reliable per pupil cost calculations. Sound state, regional, and national estimates can be made from realistic per pupil costs. The following figures reflect past NCEA calculations and projections regarding national per pupil costs:

	Computed	Projected
1970-71	$240	$ -
1971-72	-	-
1972-73	315	-
1973-74	350	-
1974-75	-	385
1975-76	-	424
1976-77	463	466

The projections made in 1974 were based upon annual cost increases of 10% for Catholic elementary schools. In view of the striking proximity of this report's $463 to the projected $466, this seems to be what happened. It is also noteworthy that per pupil costs have about doubled since 1970-71.

Enrollment and Per Pupil Costs

Another of the objectives of this report was to determine the effect of the teacher/pupil ratio upon per pupil costs. Table 5 shows the 6,601 responding schools categorized by teacher/pupil ratio and by per pupil costs. It does not appear that higher teacher/pupil ratios necessarily produce lower pupil costs. For example, most (1,655 + 1,592) elementary schools are in the 21-28 pupil/teacher range, yet the only pattern reflected is the centering of the schools upon the $400-$500 per pupil cost range. In another report, it was demonstrated that larger secondary enrollments do tend to lower the per pupil cost, probably because high schools have heavier administrative costs. On the elementary level, it seems that per pupil costs tend to vary more directly with salary levels.

The Need for Fiscal Management

Catholic schools, dioceses, and state conferences have greatly improved the quality of their financial knowledge in the past five years, and seem to be taking more control of their finances through better management. It appears pivotal that this management continue to improve. The 8,000 Catholic elementary schools are basically single-parish schools, supported in the past by large subsidies from parish donations, relatively low tuition charges, and the contributed services of the sisters. During the past decade, the recognized need for higher salaries for lay teachers, inflation, the declining number of religious staff, the movement of people to the suburbs where new construction is costly, a changed theological atmosphere in which attendance at a non-Catholic school and religious apostolates other than school apostolates are more acceptable, these and other forces produce a very complex financial picture today. Through it all, however, Catholic elementary schools seem to be stabilizing and in clear demand.

Table No. 4 (continued)
Catholic Elementary School Costs
1976-77

	Schools			PP	Estimated
	Responded	Total	Pupils	Cost	Expenses
Alaska	3	3	504	$442	$ 222,800
Arizona	39	46	13,545	352	4,767,800
California	536	602	184,522	388	71,594,500
Colorado	52	58	14,821	531	7,870,000
Hawaii	26	31	11,147	419	4,670,600
Idaho	12	12	1,917	473	906,700
Montana	16	22	3,714	489	1,816,100
New Mexico	26	31	7,505	327	2,454,100
Nevada	10	11	2,812	385	1,082,600
Oklahoma	25	29	5,227	506	2,644,900
Oregon	41	54	10,844	484	5,248,500
Texas	212	241	63,987	414	26,490,600
Utah	7	9	2,015	368	741,500
Washington	77	86	20,272	547	11,088,800
Wyoming	5	7	1,663	405	673,500
West	1,087	1,242	344,495	413	$ 142,273,000
United States	6,601	8,281	2,483,163	463	$1,149,134,000

Table No. 5
Relationship of Teacher/Pupil Ratio to Per Pupil Cost
1976-77

	Teacher/Pupil Ratio					
Per Pupil Costs	20-	21-24	25-28	29-32	33+	Total
Over $700	261	90	36	13	1	401
$600-700	261	213	123	33	12	642
$500-600	359	424	304	145	49	1,281
$400-500	344	506	555	360	208	1,973
$300-400	163	325	411	394	341	1,634
Under $300	65	97	163	153	192	670
	1,453	1,655	1,592	1,098	803	6,601

Table No. 6
Teacher/Pupil Ratio to Per Pupil Cost-by Percentages
1976-77

	Teacher/Pupil Ratio					
Per Pupil Costs	20-	21-24	25-28	29-32	33+	Total
Over $700	18.0%	5.4%	2.3%	1.2%	0.1%	6.1%
$600-700	18.0	12.9	7.7	3.0	1.5	9.7
$500-600	24.7	25.6	19.1	13.2	6.1	19.4
$400-500	23.7	30.6	34.9	32.8	25.9	29.9
$300-400	11.2	19.6	25.8	35.9	42.5	24.8
Under $300	4.4	5.9	10.2	13.9	23.9	10.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Method Regarding Revenue

The financial data about expenses was obtained from the 1977-78 government (NCES) survey, but the information as to how the $1.1 billion of operating revenue was raised came from the diocesan school offices. Of the 158 dioceses in 1976-77, 110 (70%) supplied useable data on the sources of revenue in their diocese. This reported revenue data seems reliable on a regional basis, but not on a state basis, since a few key dioceses are missing. Therefore, only regional data is reported on sources of revenue.

Sources of Revenue

As indicated by Tables 7 and 8, the major share of $605.2 million (52.6%) comes from subsidies by the parish to the school. About $433.2 million (37.7%) reflects income from tuition and fees. Fund-raising activites provide about $67.8million (5.9%), coincidentally about the same share as provided by Catholic high schools (5.3%).

Some regional variations are apparent; e.g. tuition and fees provide 63.5% of the revenue in the Southeast, but only 22.4% in the Plains states. The Mideast (30.3%) is again close to the national average in each category. Diocesan subsidies (3.9%) and fund-raising (9.1%) are highest in the New England states.

Comparison of Per Pupil Revenues

Viewing the sources of revenue on a per pupil basis, Table 9 compares the best available revenue data of previous years. From 1970-71 to 1973-74, the percentage of revenue from tuition and fees increased from 29.8% to 38.6%, while the parish subsidy share decreased from 60.0% to 52.9%. In total dollars, the parish subsidized a slightly greater amount, but the amount raised from tuition increased greatly.

On the basis of 1976-77 information, the proportions of 1973-74 have changed very little. In general, Catholic elementary schools are continuing the revenue patterns established about 1973-74. There are many variations at particular schools and parishes, of course, but the national overview seems to indicate that Catholic elementary schools are seeking to identify a feasible revenue "package", perhaps close to the present one-half from parish, one-third from tuition, and the remainder from wherever it can be raised. If a realistic revenue combination could be found, Catholic elementary schools would be far better able to plan their financial future.

Tuition and Basic Fee Charges

As shown by Table 10, the fact that tuition has increased in Catholic elementary schools during the past decade is certainly not news, but the past patterns and present ranges may be of interest. In 1970-71, about 72% of the elementary schools charged less than $100 for tuition and basic fees. By 1973-74, charges were about evenly divided among three ranges, i.e. less than $100, between $100-$200, and over $200.

In 1976-77, the majority of schools (54.5%) charged over $200 for a parishioner's first child in the family. Where only 28% charged more than $100 in 1970-71, about 80% exceeded this in 1976-77. Since 1973-74, the number of schools charging $300-$400 has doubled, and the number charging over $400 has quadrupled. In 1970-71, about 1,300 schools charged no tuition. In 1976-77, only 315 schools reported zero tuition.

Table No. 7
Sources of Revenue - Catholic Elementary Schools
1976-77 (Millions of Dollars)

	Tuition + Fees	Parish Subsidy	Diocesan Subsidy	Fund Raising	Other	Total
New England	$ 29.2	$ 24.7	$ 2.5	$ 5.9	$ 2.9	$ 65.2
Mideast	141.0	204.3	4.3	29.5	9.3	388.4
Great Lakes	94.3	218.4	1.3	11.3	8.1	333.4
Plains	24.4	78.2	.4	3.5	2.2	108.7
Southeast	70.6	28.3	1.6	5.6	5.0	111.1
West	73.7	51.3	1.0	12.0	4.3	142.3
United States	$433.2	$605.2	$11.1	$67.8	$31.8	$1149.1

Table No. 8
Sources of Revenue - By Percentages
1976-77

	Tuition + Fees	Parish Subsidy	Diocesan Subsidy	Fund Raising	Other	Total
New England	44.8%	37.8%	3.9%	9.1%	4.4%	100.0%
Mideast	36.3	52.6	1.1	7.6	2.4	100.0
Great Lakes	28.3	65.5	.4	3.4	2.4	100.0
Plains	22.4	71.9	.4	3.2	2.1	100.0
Southeast	63.5	25.5	1.4	5.0	4.6	100.0
West	51.8	36.1	.7	8.4	3.0	100.0
Unites States	37.7	52.6	1.0	5.9	2.8	100.0

Table No. 9
Sources of Per Pupil Revenue
1970-71 to 1976-77

Source	1970-71 Amt.	1970-71 %	1973-74 Amt.	1973-74 %	1976-77 Amt.	1976-77 %
Tuition + Fees	$ 70	29.8	$ 135	38.6	$ 175	37.7
Parish Subsidy	141	60.0	185	52.9	244	52.6
Diocesan Subsidy	3	1.3	4	1.1	5	1.0
Fund Raising + Other	26	8.9	26	7.4	39	8.7
Per Pupil Revenue	$ 240	100.0	$ 350	100.0	$ 463	100.0

Table No. 10
Ranges of Elementary School Tuition
1970-71 to 1976-77

Tuition Charges	1970-71 No.	1970-71 %	1973-74 No.	1973-74 %	1976-77 No.	1976-77 %
Under $100	6,719	71.7	2,864	33.5	1,722	20.8
$100 - 199	2,024	21.6	2,993	35.0	2,047	24.7
$200 - 299	384	4.1	1,693	19.8	1,904	23.0
$300 - 399	84	.9	752	8.8	1,581	19.1
$400 & over	159	1.7	248	2.9	1,027	12.4
	9,370	100.0	8,550	100.0	8,281	100.0

Ranges of Per Pupil Costs

Table 11 shows the number of schools by region within a particular per pupil cost range. The following overview illustrates the major categories:

PP Cost Range	No. of Schools	%
Over $700	401	6.1
$600 - $700	642	9.7
$500 - $600	1,281	19.4
$400 - $500	1,973	29.9
$300 - $400	1,634	24.8
Under $300	670	10.1
Reporting	6,601	100.0

Most schools are in the $400-$500 range which helps produce the $463 national PP cost. It is noteworthy that about 35% of the schools have PP costs above $500 and 35% have PP costs below $400.

On the elementary level, total operating expenses and per pupil costs seem to be determined directly and almost exclusively by the lay salary scale and the number of religious at the school. It should be noted that this report does not include any value for the services contributed by religious community members, i.e. the difference between the actual wages paid to a religious (including personal expenses paid on their behalf) and the salaries paid lay personnel in identical employment at that particular school. Since relatively few priests and brothers teach on the elementary level "religious salaries" are basically a reflection of diocesan stipends paid to the religious sisters.

Ranges of Pupil/Teacher Ratios

Table 12 is intended to illustrate elementary school class sizes around the country. Again, the following overview may help:

Pupil/Teacher Ratio	No. of Schools	%
20:1 and less	1,453	22.0
21-21	1,655	25.1
25-28	1,592	24.1
29-32	1,098	16.6
33:1 and over	803	12.2
Reporting	6,601	100.0

About one-half (49.2%) of the schools have ratios of from 21-28 pupils per teacher. In preparing this report, we did not expect to find that such a large segment (22%) of the Catholic elementary schools had less than a 20:1 ratio. On the basis of these figures, it seems that class sizes in Catholic elementary schools are generally teachable and manageable.

Conclusion

We sincerely hope that this report is of assistance to you. It is made possible by the fine cooperation you extend to the annual NCEA data gathering program, executed in conjunction with Curriculum Information Center and the National Center for Educational Statistics. We use this information extensively at the national level to discuss some of the financial dimensions of Catholic education with the appropriate educational organizations and federal authorities.

Table No. 11
Elementary PP Costs - Schools Ranged By Region
1976-77

Per Pupil Costs	New England	Mideast	Great Lakes	Plains	Southeast	West	United States	%
$150-200	10	18	15	6	14	17	80	1.2
$200-250	26	52	18	9	26	45	176	2.7
$250-300	42	123	44	22	64	119	414	6.3
$300-350	69	193	110	51	95	172	690	10.5
$350-400	89	282	177	73	118	205	944	14.3
$400-450	59	344	254	97	117	168	1,039	15.7
$450-500	40	301	264	108	94	127	934	14.2
$500-550	29	219	253	107	65	80	753	11.4
$550-600	16	137	217	70	43	45	528	8.0
$600-650	9	87	169	69	35	32	401	6.1
$650-700	6	57	81	38	20	39	241	3.6
$700-750	1	34	69	15	8	13	140	2.1
$750-800	1	28	22	12	3	8	74	1.1
Over $800	9	62	58	31	10	17	187	2.8
Reporting	406	1,937	1,751	708	712	1,087	6,601	100.0

Table No. 12
Elementary Pupil/Teacher Ratios - Schools Ranged By Region
1976-77

P/T Ratio	New England	Mideast	Great Lakes	Plains	Southeast	West	United States	%
Over 40:1	2	34	4	1	2	26	69	1.1
39-40	2	28	7	-	-	39	76	1.1
37-38	2	45	12	-	5	44	108	1.6
35-36	10	85	35	4	14	65	213	3.2
33-34	27	109	73	7	35	86	337	5.1
31-32	33	181	139	10	52	105	520	7.9
29-30	39	193	154	13	67	112	578	8.8
27-28	73	206	242	44	98	97	760	11.5
25-26	62	229	273	64	89	115	832	12.6
23-24	63	242	246	113	102	104	870	13.2
21-22	39	199	225	137	88	97	785	11.9
19-20	27	153	160	103	79	74	596	9.0
17-18	13	109	98	86	37	60	403	6.1
15-16	7	52	59	71	22	32	243	3.7
Under 14:1	7	72	24	55	22	31	211	3.2
Reporting	406	1,937	1,751	708	712	1,087	6,601	100.0
Total	582	2,464	2,204	917	872	1,242	8,281	-
% Reporting	69.8	78.6	79.5	77.2	81.6	87.5	79.7	-

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